

Samuel Carlile House
87 Williams Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-251

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
148-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

SAMUEL CARLILE HOUSE

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
148-

Address: 87 Williams Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island. Plot 16, Lot 235. 32 Williams
Street in 1834, 50 Williams Street in 1848, 51 Williams
Street in 1871, 87 Williams Street since 1894.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mrs. Ernest T. H. Metcalf.

Present Use: Dwelling.

Brief Statement
of Significance: This is a characteristic example of a medium-sized
brick house of about 1800. It is one of an unusual
series of houses built on Williams Street at this
time on leased land with certain building restric-
tions stipulated in the lease.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Original and Subsequent Owners:

1798 Indenture between William Holroyd, attorney for Peleg Williams
and wife Rebekah and Samuel Carlile, shipjoiner for a twenty years
lease on a certain lot of land. Carlile is to erect a brick
DWELLING HOUSE within two years on the premises and is to be set
back 6 1/2' from Williams Street. Bounded:

S by Ashton's land 50'
N by Williams Street 50'
W by Lessor
E by Lessor

Lease may be renewed in twenty year periods...Deed Book 27, page
690, in Providence City Hall.

1801 The Carlile family lived here (Providence Directory) and until
1907.

1904 Elizabeth Carlile devises the property with DWELLING HOUSE to
her cousins Sarah King Birkhead and Annie E King of Newport.
George Gordon King administrator of the Will assigns and grants
the above to the said cousins...Wills Book 463, page 169, in
Providence City Hall.

1904 Sarah K Birkhead and Annie E King sell the above property to
S James Foster jr "a certain lease from William Holroyd
issued to Samuel Carlile in 1798 and the DWELLING HOUSE and
other improvements"...Deed Book 463, page 170, in Providence
City Hall.

1907 S J Foster and/or family lived here and until 1916...Providence Directory.

1915 S James Foster jr sells to Ernest T H Metcalf the DWELLING HOUSE of Samuel Carlile...also a renewal of the lease of the land from the RIHT trustee u/w Desmond Fitzgerald to James Foster jr in 1913...Bounded N by Williams Street 50'; W by Alfred Coata 78'; S by Arnold Greene 50'; E by John Smith, trustee...Deed Book 548, page 242, in Providence City Hall.

Providence Directory

1917-1924	Ernest T H Metcalf	1931-1932	Leonard Colt
1925-1930	Theodora Colt	1933.....	Ernest T H Metcalf

B. Date of Erection: 1798-1800.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
May 1963

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a characteristic example of a medium-sized brick house of about 1800.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: About 32' (five-bay north front) x 30' main block, two stories high, plus rear wing.
2. Foundations: Fieldstone, brick water table in front.
3. Wall construction: Brick, common bond; brick belt course between stories.
4. Stoops: Brownstone stoop, four steps high.
5. Chimneys: One chimney in each end wall serving fireplaces in northwest and northeast rooms. Very unusual triangular chimney.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: Pedimented doorway with semicircular fan-light, typical of the period but not original. Marks in the brick indicate at least two previous doorways.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Double-hung, six-over-six light sash; flat brick arches over windows; wood sills; adjustable louvered shutters.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable, asphalt shinglea.
- b. Cornice: Molded wood cornice with stepped brick bed mold and dentil course.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

- 1. Floor plans: Central hall, five-room plan, plus kitchen wing to the rear. Wall between small southwest room and northwest parlor removed. Wall between central rear room and southwest room on second floor removed.
- 2. Stairways: Open well, open string, straight run with landing and turn at the top, molded rail, two slender rectangular balusters per step, flat sawn scroll step end ornaments.
- 3. Flooring: Wide board floors in most rooms.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, molded chair rail and molded cornices in some rooms, small-scale moldings.
- 5. Doorways and doors: Raised panel doors, molded, mitered architraves on doorways.
- 6. Trim: Flat paneled interior shutters.
- 7. Hardware: Case locks with small brass knobs on many doors.
- 8. Lighting: Electric.
- 9. Heating: Central with radiators. Mostly one-story wood mantels, complicated moldings at small scale, unusual paneled arrangements. Very unusual triangular chimney in rear wall serving south central and southwest rooms with diagonal fireplaces.

D. Site:

- 1. Orientation and general setting: Faces north, house on sidewalk line; narrow, level lot with garden on the rear.
- 2. Enclosures: Wood fences.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby
Yale University
May 1963